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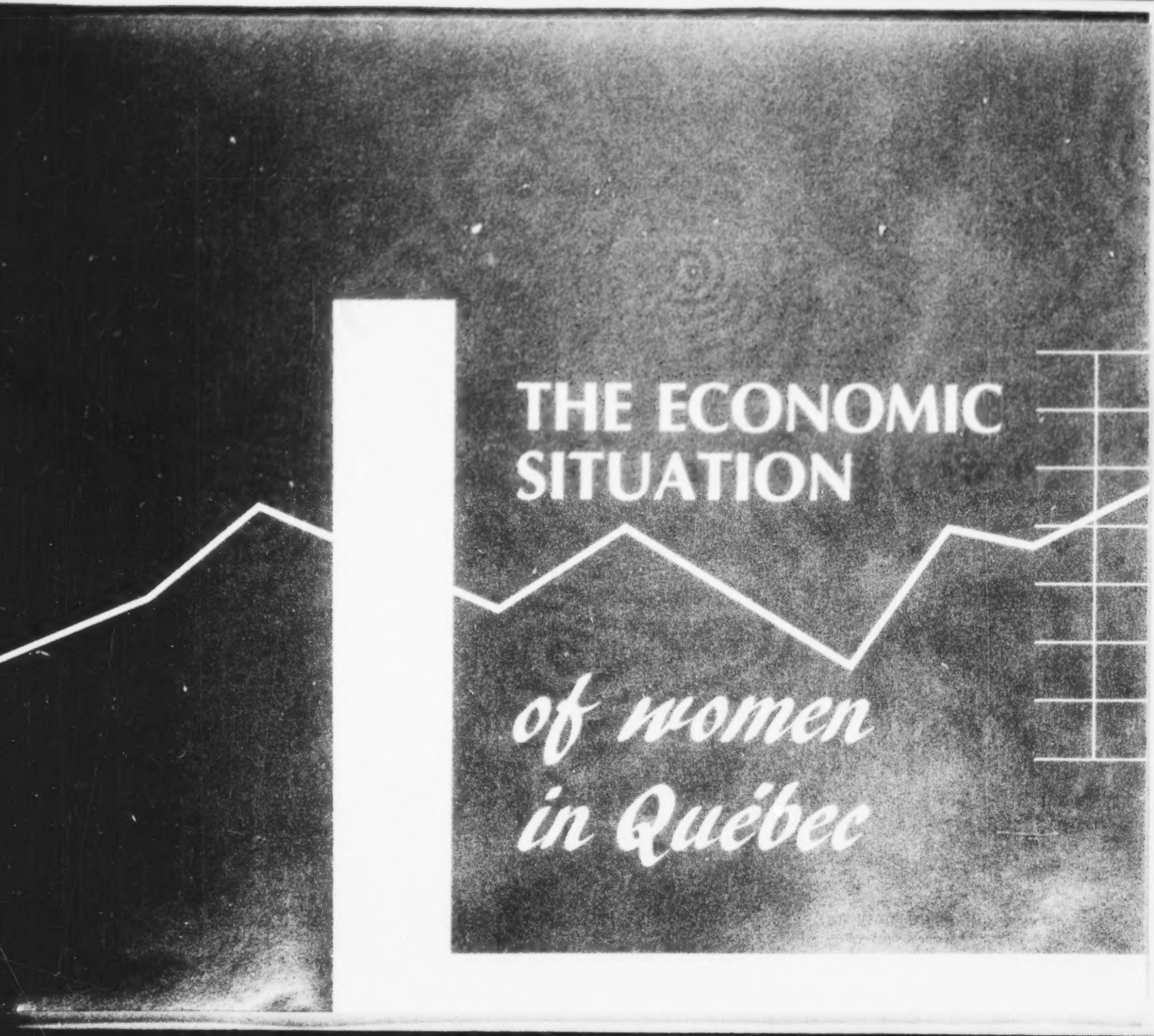
DÉCISIONS 85

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

of women in Québec

Québec


THE ECONOMIC SITUATION
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Legal deposit: second quarter 1985
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISBN: 2-550-12149-X

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FOREWORD

In May and December of 1985, the decision makers of our society will gather for a conference on the economic security of women in Québec.

This document has been designed as a reference tool. It provides a collection of general information and cites recent statistics in order to help assess the level of economic security currently enjoyed by women in Québec, and judge how much remains to be done to improve the situation.

The first part provides data on the participation of women in the wage labour market and in work in the home. it also gives a brief outline of the situation with respect to women's training and deals with certain particularly vulnerable clienteles, such as social aid recipients, the heads of single-parent families and elderly women. Women who come from cultural communities must, to a large extent, deal with the same conditions as other women in Québec. Nonetheless, certain aspects of their experience are specifically dealt with.

The second part deals with certain problems specific to women and briefly explores the solutions which women themselves have worked out.

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The decade 1975-1985 abounds with significant accomplishments by and for women. Women are asserting themselves as an economic force by increasing their penetration in all fields, playing a major role in the consumer movement as well as by their determination to move towards greater financial independence. As partners in society's collective creation of wealth, an increasing number of women have benefited proportionately to their investment.

Improvements with respect to training and access to the labour market, the institution of programs and services adapted to women's reality and the evolution of attitudes are all evidence of an openness to women's demands for fuller participation in the pursuit of society's goals.

However, though statistics indicate both a qualitative and a quantitative increase in women's participation in all sectors, they also show that women, as a group, have yet to attain occupational equality and still lag behind men in terms of economic.

An increased presence with its roots in history

The phenomenon of women's liberation was initially perceived and depicted as a self-centred iniative which would benefit women alone. However, it quickly established itself as a financial obligation... a response to the profound changes which society as a whole was undergoing.

The unprecedented economic growth, prosperity and high employment of the period from 1945 to 1970 were over. As a model for the family, the married couple with two or three children and the wife staying at home from the beginning of the marriage or, at the latest, with the arrival of the first child, was less and less representative. Marriage breakdown was also becoming increasingly common and as a result, the idyllic vision of the husband as the unconditional guarantor of economic security for the wife and children became progressively untenable.

Traditionally, women had been brought up to become lifelong, full-time wives and mothers, leaving it up to the husband to shoulder the entire responsibility of providing for the family. A girl's education was saturated with this vision of her future role; her training would be general in nature or, at most, geared to a specialized field which was an extension of her primary role.

The new life styles adopted by men and women entailed a radical questioning of the socialization process. As we shall see, women were more deeply affected by this questioning than men.

The family has been severely tested since the end of the sixties. The marriage rate has fallen continuously; it is projected that by the end of the nineties, one out of every two women will never marry. Those persons who continue to opt for marriage as a life style realize that it can no longer guarantee the same stability as before; divorce has increased four fold over the past twenty years. These breakdowns have given rise to the emergence of a new type of family, very much the exception in earlier times: the single-parent family. Eight out of ten such families are headed by women; as a group, they currently represent 12 % of all families in Québec.

These new models require that women ensure their own economic security, in order to provide for their own survival and that of their children. And the numbers continue to grow: according to the forecasts, out of 100 adolescent girls today, 86 will have to provide for their own needs and those of their family at some point in their life.

As for those who continue to live with a spouse, economic conditions are such that not all have the choice of remaining at home. For the great majority of households, the woman's participation in the labour market has become increasingly necessary, indeed, even essential: from 1970 to 1983, women's contribution to family income rose from 25 % to 33 %. The National Council of Welfare has determined that if women were to withdraw from the labour market, the number of families living below the poverty line would double. It is estimated that women's contribution to family income will rise to 40 % by 1990, and that the number of families with only one spouse working will account for no more than 14 % of all households.

If the new model with both spouses working outside the home is becoming the standard, it is still the case that in 1985, more than 50 % of married women remain at home and live within a traditional family framework.

This is the first time in their history that western countries have had to live through such a critical period, with two models of equal numerical importance: women working in the home, and those working outside. From a historical point of view, the traditional model is preponderant and, in some respects, is an object of nostalgia. The other model predominates among young people under 35.

The demands of women encompass these different realities. They all seek to assure greater economic security for women. They extend from the recognition of the fair value of the economic and social contribution of work in the home to occupational equality on the labour market.

Until quite recently, the gouvernement du Québec was women's preferred partner in the search for solutions to their economic problems. There are many reasons for this choice: the government's legislative role at a time when improvements in certain laws were crucial; its role as an employer and, finally, its role as protector of the most disadvantaged, which include a majority of women and children.

At the conclusion of International Women's Decade, women in Québec recognize the necessity of broadening the dialogue to other socioeconomic partners. If the project appears difficult, it is nonetheless necessary and will benefit all, men as well as women. We are at a point when we can no longer ignore the place that women occupy and will occupy in the labour market; a point when more and more women must care for their children and look after household tasks on their own, while at the same time earning a living; a point when equal opportunity programs are needed to give women access to better jobs and pay levels; a point when technological change threatens jobs traditionally occupied by women and makes job retraining a necessity for a significant portion of the female labour force; in short, a point at which the situation demands action not only from elected representatives, but also from employers, unions and the professional, business and financial communities.

The situation with all its complexities must be recognized and fully understood if effective and coherent action is to be adopted for the short, medium and long terms. For, although there is no immediate solution for each of the problems raised, measures do exist which are appropriate and whose effects will be of benefit to society as a whole.

EMPLOYMENT

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The rapid pace of change

A study of the data on the situation of women in the labour market in Québec reveals a rapid and sustained growth in participation rates among women. Whereas in 1951, one worker in four (23 %) was a women, in 1981, women accounted for 39.7 % of total manpower. In 1982, Québec's labour force included 1 163 000 women. Indeed, almost half the women 15 or over belonged to the labour force (table 1 and figure 1).

Table 1

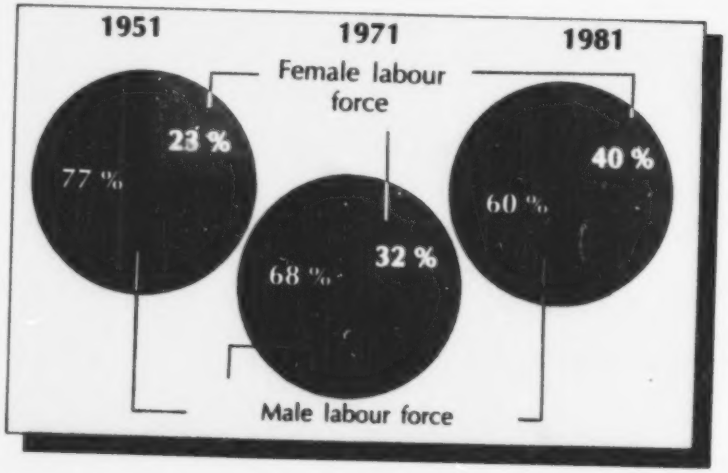
Women 15 or over, by participation in the labour force, Québec, 1982

Age group	Total population	Labour force	Participation rate
15-19	280 000	109 000	38.7
20-24	310 000	220 000	70.9
25-34	561 000	334 000	59.4
35-44	422 000	246 000	58.3
45-54	338 000	162 000	48.1
55-64	299 000	80 000	26.6
65 or over	322 000	13 000	4.1
Total (average rate)	**2 533 000**	**1 163 000**	**(45.9)**

Source: S. Messier, *Les femmes ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, p. 32.

Figure 1

Breakdown of the labour force by sex, Québec, 1951, 1971 and 1981



Source: Statistics Canada, Historical labour force Statistics, 1966-1984, cat. 71-201.

A presence less closely tied to one type of family situation than in the past

Women's family situation — a variable which combines marital situation and the age of their children — continues to influence their participation rate, but much less significantly than previously. Almost half of married women now have a paid job, 47 % compared to 7 % in 1951 (table 2). Moreover, between 1976 and 1981, the participation rate for mothers with children under 6 rose from 32.4 % to 44.6 %. Indeed, this group has experienced the greatest increase in the labour force participation rate. Thus, more women are returning to work outside the home after the birth of their children (figure 2).

Table 2

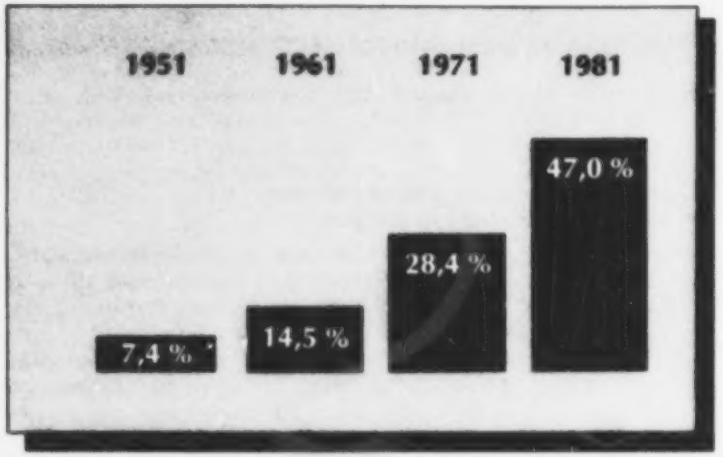
Participation of women in the labour force, Québec, 1951 to 1981

	1951	1961	1971	1981
% of women in the total labour force	23.2 %	27.1 %	33.3 %	39.7 %
% of women on the labour market	25.1 %	28.2 %	35.0 %	47.5 %
% of married women on the labour market	7.4 %	14.5 %	28.4 %	47.0 %

Source: Table based on data taken from S. Messier, *Les femmes ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, 1984.

Figure 2

Participation of married women in the labour force, Québec, 1951 to 1981



Source: Table based on data compiled by S. Messier, *Les femmes, ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, 1984.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Concentration in the tertiary sector

For several decades, the distribution of female labour within the major sectors of activity and according to occupation has depended on the development of Québec's economic structure as a whole: the fall in agricultural employment, moderate growth of employment in the manufacturing sector and significant growth in the tertiary sector. What is perhaps more revealing in the female population is that three out of four women in the labour market work in the tertiary sector and of those, 43 % work in socio-cultural, commercial and personnel services. This is in sharp contrast to the male population where the occupational distribution is more even (table 3).

The beginnings of occupational diversification

The level of female participation in the major sectors of economic activity is on the increase. Clearly, the relative presence of women in all branches of activity has increased. The growth has been particularly striking in agriculture, construction, transportation, merchandising, finance and public administration. Nevertheless, women continue to dominate in certain sectors of activity which they have traditionally occupied: women hold almost 60 % of jobs in the financial and service sectors (table 4).

Table 3

Distribution of manpower by sex among the major sectors of economic activity, Québec, 1951 to 1981

Sector of economic activity	1951	1961	1971	1981
Women				
Agriculture	2.3	3.2	2.1	1.4
Other primary sector activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing industries	30.8	24.0	18.1	16.1
Construction	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.1
Transportation, communication and other public services	4.6	4.5	3.7	4.4
Commerce	13.6	13.2	12.5	15.7
Finance, insurance and real estate	4.7	5.4	5.9	7.5
Commercial, personal and socio-cultural services	39.5	42.3	39.5	42.8
Public administration	2.4	3.5	4.5	6.5
Undetermined and undefined activities	1.3	3.1	12.7	4.2
Total %	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
N	**340 591**	**478 694**	**721 785**	**1 174 440**
Men				
Agriculture	16.3	8.8	4.0	3.3
Other primary sector activities	6.0	5.3	3.3	2.9
Manufacturing industries	28.8	27.1	25.6	25.0
Construction	8.2	9.8	7.9	7.6
Transportation, communication and other public services	10.6	11.1	10.1	10.1
Commerce	12.6	14.5	14.1	15.9
Finance, insurance and real estate	2.0	2.8	3.3	3.2
Commercial, personal and socio-cultural services	9.1	11.5	16.3	20.6
Public administration	4.1	6.2	7.3	7.8
Undetermined and undefined activities	2.0	2.8	8.0	3.6
Total %	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
N	**1 126 696**	**1 289 425**	**1 447 365**	**1 812 095**

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, Industries, Historical, cat. 94-739, May 1976, Table 1.
Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Labour force, Industry Trends, cat. 92-925, November 1983, Table 1.

Table 4

Level of female participation in the manpower of the major sectors of economic activity, Québec, 1951 to 1981

Sector of economic activity	1951	1961	1971	1981
Agriculture	4.1	12.1	20.5	21.7
Other primary sector activities	1.3	1.9	3.6	6.7
Manufacturing industries	24.4	24.7	26.1	29.4
Construction	1.4	1.9	4.1	8.6
Transportation	11.6	13.1	15.5	22.1
Commerce	24.6	25.3	30.6	39.0
Finance, insurance and real estate	40.9	41.3	47.4	59.7
Commercial, personal and socio-cultural services	56.9	57.6	54.7	57.4
Public administration and defense	15.2	17.4	23.4	35.2
Undetermined activities	16.6	29.1	44.3	43.5
Average rate	**23.2**	**27.1**	**33.3**	**39.9**

Source: Suzanne Messier, *Les femmes ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, 1984.

Greater exposure to part-time work

Part-time employment grew significantly during the seventies: the number of part-time jobs rose 46.2 % between 1975 and 1979, compared to the 3.9 % increase in full-time jobs. Furthermore, over the same period, 47.6% of new jobs created were part-time and this trend appears to be holding in the eighties.

Part-time work is another feature of employment for women. The percentage of working women who work part-time is relatively high. In Québec, in 1982, 21.4 % of women in the labour force worked part-time, compared to 6.1 % for men.

The proportion of part-time workers is a relatively high among women in every age group. Among men, part-time employment is concentrated in the young and the elderly (table 5).

Although part-time work does offer the advantage of greater flexibility for studies and time at home, it has several disadvantages: low pay, limited opportunity for unionization, few fringe benefits, few or no unemployment insurance benefits and reduced participation in retirement plans.

Moreover, impending technological changes seriously threaten to push up the percentage of part-time jobs held by women.

Table 5

Employed manpower, total and part-time, by age and sex, Québec, 1982

	Women			Men		
Age group	Total	Part-time	% part-time total	Total	Part-time	% part-time total
15-24	261 000	70 000	26.8	284 000	65 000	22.9
25-44	508 000	93 000	18.3	799 000	15 000	1.9
45-54	147 000	32 000	21.8	264 000	4 000	1.5
55-64	73 000	14 000	19.2	166 000	4 000	2.4
65 or over	13 000	5 000	38.5	25 000	6 000	24.0
Total	**1 001 000**	**214 000**	**(21.4)**	**1 539 000**	**94 000**	**(6.1)**

Source: Suzanne Messier, op. cit., p. 39.

A segment of the labour force more severely affected by unemployment

As with men, the unemployment rate for women is a reflection of the prevailing economic conditions. However, unemployment is generally higher among women than among men. In Québec, in 1984, the unemployment among rate for women stood at 13.3 % compared to 12.5 % for men (table 6).

Since January 1983, Canada has proven to be an exception to this rule, since the unemployment rate for men has been higher than it has been for women. At the beginning of the recession, women were hardest hit by falling employment; between 1981 and 1983, male-dominated sectors of activity were more directly affected by lay-offs.

A study undertaken by the Economic Council of Canada shows that, on the surface, men suffered more severely from the recession. However, women were more particularly hard hit by the hidden effects of the recession, that is, the effects which are measured by data on involuntary part-time work and discouraged workers.[1]

Table 6

Unemployment rate by sex, Québec, 1951 to 1984

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1982	1983[1]	1984[2]
Men	2.1	5.0	9.8	9.8	13.7	13.9	12.5
Women	1.5	2.7	10.4	11.3	14.0	14.0	13.3
Both sexes	2.0	4.4	10.0	10.0	13.8	13.9	12.9

1. Ministère du Travail, *Le marché du travail*, Volume 6, Number 1, Gouvernement du Québec, January 1985.

2. Statistics Canada, 1984.

Source: Jeannine David-McNeil and A. Morin-Fortier, *Autonomie économique des femmes*, Conference, Québec, May 1983, p. 69.

1. J. BOULET and L. LAVALLÉE, *The Changing Economic Status of Women*, Economic Council of Canada, 1984.

A significant presence in precarious jobs

A precarious job is characterized by a lack of security or protection, difficult working conditions and, in most cases, very low wages. Declared domestic work and domestic work or work done outside the home in the underground come into this category.

In Québec, 60 000 women perform declared domestic work (table 7). Whether in their own homes or in another residence, they do declared work in the home care for children, and do maintenance work as well as seamstress work. They also do filling work, light assembly work, typing and telephone soliciting.

The wages for one category of such domestic workers were revealed in a published enquiry undertaken among domestic workers registered with the Comité paritaire du vêtement pour dames[2]. The workers who were interviewed had worked an average of half a year during 1980, namely between 24 and 27 weeks. They had earned a gross income ranging between $2 735 and $3 469 depending on the region, in return for a relatively high number of hours/week: 39 hours in Montréal, 41 hours in the outskirts of Montréal and 33 elsewhere in Québec.

Many women participate in the underground economy. This work is not declared and is carried out in various settings, such as the household and the hospitality industry. The International Labour Office (I.L.O.) estimates that between 3 % and 5 % of the labour force of OECD countries participates in the underground economy. Applying these estimates to the female population of Québec (1979 figures), between 33 000 and 55 000 women would be engaged in this kind of work.

Several factors help explain why women decide to work under these conditions: the imperative need to earn an income, while continuing to carry out household tasks and look after children full-time, is an important factor. Another is lack of schooling and the scarcity of jobs. Finally, for a good number of women who belong to cultural communities, other elements come into play, such as a poor command of the language and the non recognition of degrees and experience obtained in their home country.

Table 7

Female manpower by workplace and occupational status, Québec, 1981

Occupational status	In the home		Outside the home		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employee	43 745	65.9	1 078 250	98.2	1 121 995	96.3
Self-employed	10 330	15.6	10 400	0.9	20 730	1.8
Employer	3 170	4.8	6 320	0.6	9 490	0.8
Unpaid family worker	9 075	13.7	3 405	0.3	12 480	1.1
Total	**66 325**	**100.0**	**1 098 370**	**100.0**	**1 164 695**	**100.0**

Note: This table does not include workers with no work experience who accounted for 4 % of the labour force in 1981.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, special tabulations prepared for the Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, Table 12.
Suzanne Messier, op. cit., p. 115.

2. Diane JEAN and J.F. GUILLOTEAU, Centre de recherche et de statistiques sur le marché du travail, *Le travail à domicile dans le vêtement pour dames*, Gouvernement du Québec, 1982.

Successful minorities

The number of women professionals, executives and chief executive officers has significantly increased over the past ten years. Though still a minority, there has been definite and irreversible progress.

Looking at the public service, in 1983, women accounted for 12 % of deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, presidents and members of organizations, compared to 4.4 % in 1979. Still in 1983, women accounted for 4.5 % of senior management (1.7 % in 1979) and 14.5 % of supervisory personnel (12.4 % in 1979). The percentage of women in the regular "professional" workforce remained relatively stable (14.3 % in 1979, 17.4 % in 1983) in most departments (with the exception of three, where it fell).

In addition, one category of women has had a forceful and dynamic impact: women entrepreneurs. The number of businesses in which women are employers has grown by 150 % in seven years, from 4 000 in 1975 to 10 000 in 1982. There has also been a remarkable growth in the number of self-employed women: 100 %, compared to only 33 % among men during the same period.

To illustrate, 12 000 out of 49 000 manufacturing firms include at least one woman as a company director. The sectors of economic activity in which women are most heavily involved are, in decreasing order: the garment industry, printing, wood products, furniture and sawmills, food[3].

A study undertaken by the Direction de l'entrepreneurship au féminin of the ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce based on 49 chief executive officers provides a picture of the Québec business woman and the special problems she encounters[4].

Typically, the Québec business woman goes into business between the ages of 30 and 45; she is married, has children, and spends 40 to 70 hours per week at her work. The major motivations that drive business women are a desire to be their own boss and a need for financial independence. The major difficulties they encounter are the lack of credibility they receive from their milieu and from financial institutions when their business is getting off the ground, on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that they are frequently isolated in business circles (200 women out of a total membership of 6 000 in the Montréal Chamber of Commerce, 7 women out of 450 members of the Groupement québécois d'entreprises, membership discrimination in such clubs as the Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, etc.).

Finally, women professionals and executives enjoy greater status than most women workers, and their employment opportunities are better. Nonetheless, they are generally paid less than their male colleagues, for equivalent qualifications and job, and their career advancement is generally slower.

Women working in their husband's business: a situation with no male equivalent

There is no equivalent to speak of for this category of employment. In 1975, 100 000 women worked in a business owned by their husband. For an average 23 hour work week, 85 % of these women received no wages, and of these, some 30 % worked more than 40 hours[5].

Today, these women number 125 000. They work with their spouse in a profit-oriented company: small merchandising concerns, farm businesses, or professional office. They work as secretaries, receptionists, bookkeepers, they work the cash register or take part in farm work.

Though the federal and Québec governments recognized, in 1980, wages paid to one spouse working in a business owned by the other spouse as an operating expense and though the gouvernement du Québec granted eligibility to the Québec Pension Plan, statistics indicate that, since 1975, there has been no increase in the number of women who are paid for their work with their husband. Similarly, the amendments to the income tax legislation to take account of the legal status of women working for their spouse have not increased the number of women co-owners or partners.

3. Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, Direction de l'entrepreneurship au féminin.

4. « Les femmes en affaires au Québec : un portrait ».

5. Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale, *La femme collaboratrice de son mari dans une entreprise à but lucratif, 1975-1976*, Éditeur officiel du Québec, Montréal, August 1975, 221 p.

A category seeking recognition: women farmers

On almost every farm in Québec, a woman — sometimes several — works to produce the agricultural products society requires.

On the basis of a study undertaken on 2 116 farm women, Suzanne Dion, the author of "Les femmes dans l'agriculture au Québec"[6] gives a profile of these little-known women and assesses their contribution to agriculture.

Who are these women? In general, farm women are a varied group. They span the entire age spectrum, are found in every region, and produce a wide variety of goods. However, they do share two major traits: most are married and have children.

What do they do? In the summer, 24 % of farm women work between 31 and 45 hours per week in the business, while 15 % devote between 46 and 60 hours and 12 % more than 60 hours per week. Many are responsible for the accounts as well as for obtaining the multiplicity of information required to run a modern business. Finally, a good many participate in the management of the business. Of those who responded, 42 % had invested their personal funds in the business. As for the income they receive for their work, some, a minority, are paid a salary.

6. Suzanne DION, *Les femmes dans l'agriculture au Québec*, Les Éditions La Terre de chez-nous, Longueuil, 1983, 165 p.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF PAID FEMALE WORKERS

A slight narrowing of the income gap

Although the income gap is tending to narrow over time, women in Québec are still paid much less than their male colleagues.

Looking at the situation in Québec with respect to average employment income by occupation and sex, the difference in average employment income between men and women in 1981 amounted to 57.3 %, compared to 55 % in 1979. The average income in 1981 for men earning employment income was $17 232, with 54.3 % of these men earning more than $15 000. For the same year, the average income for women was $9 866, and only 22.6 % of all working women earned $15 000 per year or more.

Part of this difference can be explained by the fact that more women work part-time. However, this is only part of the explanation, since significant income gaps persist for men and women working full-time. In 1979, the average income earned by a woman ($11 549) was 64.5 % of that earned by a man ($17 909). Four years earlier, it came to 62.9 %. Turning to hourly wages, 53.1 % of women working full-time were paid a wage under $8 per hour, whereas 69.6 % of men were paid more than that. As a result of their wages, women may also be disadvantaged with respect to fringe benefits and company pension plans.

Besides part-time work, other factors account for the difference in employment income between men and women and the inequalities with respect to fringe benefits. These factors are:

- the concentration of female employment in a limited number of sectors of economic activity. Within these sectors, labour supply exceeds demand, leading most frequently to a higher unemployment rate and lower direct and indirect remuneration;

- the large number of women workers in low-productivity sectors: socio-cultural, commercial and personal services;
- the continuing high number of women who work in occupations with low pay because they are accorded a low position in wage classification scales;
- lower level of schooling among women;
- academic choices which remain strongly influenced by boy/girl socialization differences, tending to perpetuate occupational segregation;
- women's family obligations, which cause them to withdraw from the labour market from time to time and gravitate to sectors with high labour turnover rates;
- eligibility for fringe benefit plans that, in some cases, is based on an evaluation of risks which are prejudicial to women;
- lower rate of unionization among women workers. Available statistics indicate that 30 % of working women, compared to 37 % of working men, belong to unions.

Recent studies indicate that although the above factors account for a very significant proportion of the wage gap between men and women, over 10 % remains unaccounted for, and is attributable to discrimination. This discrimination may be direct, in which case we are dealing with blatantly sexist practices, or systemic.

The term systemic discrimination refers to a body or "system" of practices which, without necessarily being intentional or in bad faith, help to perpetuate an existing inequality with respect to a group. For example, the use in certain male-dominated sectors, of tools developed for male workers of a certain size or physical strength is an instance of systemic discrimination. Until these tools are adapted to women workers, these sectors will remain, for all intents and purposes, closed to women, without them being explicitly barred.

To summarize, women have made inroads in all occupations and fields of economic activity. There has been some reduction in salary differentials; however, this must be set against the increase in the number of unemployed women and women working part-time. It must be concluded that, despite a degree of economic progress, women do not enjoy occupational equality with men in their day-to-day experience:

- women are at a disadvantage in the labour market, where they are concentrated in the tertiary sector which is threatened by technological change;
- part-time work is reserved for women: 21.4 % of the female labour force. In this situation, the average hourly wage is less than what is paid to full-time male and female workers, and fringe benefits are not always available;
- in Québec, unemployment among women is higher than among men;
- many working women, because of their age, training, family responsibilities, their status as immigrants, or the lack of job openings, must depend on precarious types of work: domestic work or work in the underground economy;
- on average, and excluding part-time work, women earn 64.5 % of men's wages; when part-time work is included, this percentage falls to 57.3 %.

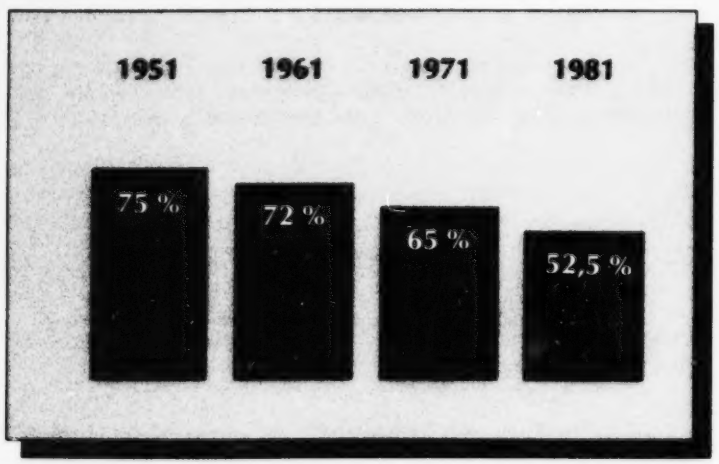
WOMEN WORKING IN THE HOME

A group on the decline

Whether it is called "work at home", "domestic work" or "domestic production", this is the full time occupation of one out of every two women in Québec in 1985. According to a recent study[7], more than 800 000 women in Québec worked at home full-time in 1979. However, over the last few decades, the proportion of women working at home has fallen significantly: in 1951, 75 % of women in Québec worked in the home full-time; by 1981, the proportion had fallen to 52.5 % (figure 3). Among women likely to be in this situation (because of the presence and/or the age of children), the decrease is even more significant: in 1951, 76.1 % of women 25-34 did not pursue a remunerative activity; in 1981, the percentage had fallen to 38.2 %. For the 35-44 age group, the corresponding percentages fell from 79.4 % to 42.6 % (table 8 and figure 4).

Figure 3

Percentage of women working in the home, Québec, 1951 to 1981



Sources: Based on Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, *Labour force and individual income*, Historical, cat. 94-702, November 1974, Table 3.
Based on Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Labour force Activity, cat. 92-415, Table 1.

Table 8

Labour participation rate by age and sex, Québec, 1951 to 1981

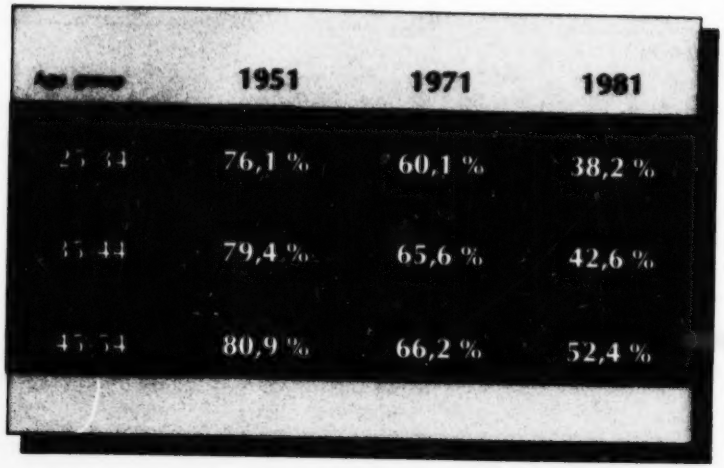
Age group	1951	1961	1971	1976	1981
Women					
15-19	40.5	37.9	32.5	37.8	36.6
20-24	46.3	51.3	61.4	67.5	76.5
25-34	23.9	27.0	39.9	50.8	61.8
35-44	20.6	24.8	34.4	45.9	57.4
45-54	19.1	26.7	33.8	40.4	47.6
55-64	14.0	20.3	26.4	26.8	29.0
65 or over	5.8	7.3	9.0	7.7	5.8
Average rate	**25.1**	**28.2**	**35.0**	**41.2**	**47.5**
Men					
15-19	63.8	39.8	37.4	45.4	40.5
20-24	91.3	84.3	80.8	83.3	88.0
25-34	96.4	93.0	87.8	91.3	93.5
35-44	96.6	93.1	87.3	91.1	92.7
45-54	94.5	90.3	84.3	87.9	88.8
55-64	85.6	80.0	73.4	74.6	74.0
65 or over	36.4	27.5	21.5	17.1	14.7
Average rate	**85.2**	**77.3**	**71.4**	**74.6**	**75.8**

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, Labour Force and Individual Income, Historical, cat. 94-702, November 1974, Table 2.
Statistics Canada, 1976 Census of Canada, Labour Force Activity, cat. 94-804, September 1978, Table 9.
Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Labour Force Activity, cat. 92-915, Table 1

7. Louise VANDELAC, Diane BÉLISLE, Yolande PINARD et Anne GAUTHIER, *Du travail et de l'amour*, Éditions Saint-Martin, 1985, p. 38.

Figure 4

Percentage of women working in the home, by age group, Québec, 1951, 1971 and 1981



Age group	1951	1971	1981
25-34	76,1 %	60,1 %	38,2 %
35-44	79,4 %	65,6 %	42,6 %
45-54	80,9 %	66,2 %	52,4 %

Sources: Based on Statistics Canada data, 1971 Census of Canada, *Labour force and individual income*, Historical, cat. 94-702, November 1974, Table 2.

Based on Statistics Canada data, 1976 Census of Canada, Labour force Activity, cat. 94-804, September 1978, Table 9.

Based on Statistics Canada data, 1981 Census of Canada, Labour force Activity, Cat. 92-915, Table 1.

More detailed data indicate that more women continue to participate in the labour market after marriage and the arrival of children. In 1951, almost 90 % of married women stayed at home. That proportion had fallen to less than 50 % in 1981. As a result, one out of every two married women holds a paying job. Indeed, the increase from 1951 to 1981 in the overall participation rate of Québec women in the labour force is mainly due to the heavier participation of married women: in 1951, their participation rate stood at 7 %; by 1981, it had risen to 47 % (table 9).

The trend is the same when we turn to the presence of children. In 1976, 36.4 % of women with children under 25 years of age participated in the labour market; by 1981, the proportion had risen to 46.3 %. The situation is repeated among women with children 0-5 years of age: in 1976, 32.4 % worked outside the home, while in 1981, the proportion had climbed to 44.6 %. The greater the age of the youngest child, the greater the participation of women in the labour market. For example, in 1981, 43.5 % of women in the 25-44 age group with children 0-5 years of age worked outside the home; the proportion rose to 60.8 % for women with children 12-24 years of age (table 10).

Fewer women remain at home full-time for their entire life and they constitute an older group than those who combine paid and unpaid work. "Pressed by female employment and changes in women's life cycles, the model of the full-time homemaker is showing its age and becoming less popular. Indeed, among full-time homemakers, one out of every two is over 45, while among those who combine paid work with work in the home, only one in five is over 45".[8]

8. Ibid., p. 38.

Table 9

Labour force participation rate by marital status and sex, Québec, 1951 to 1981

Marital status	1951	1961	1971	1981
Women				
Single women	58.8	58.6	52.2	57.0
Married				47.0
Separated	7.4	14.5	28.4	50.8
Widowed				16.6
Divorced	15.8	18.7	20.8	57.7
Total	**25.1**	**28.2**	**35.0**	**47.5**
Men				
Single men	78.6	62.3	58.3	65.1
Married				82.8
Separated	91.5	87.3	80.2	71.9
Widowed				31.0
Divorced	47.4	40.0	41.4	80.7
Total	**85.2**	**77.3**	**71.4**	**75.8**

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, Labour Force and Individual Income, Historical, cat. 94-702, November 1974, Table 3.

Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Labour Force Activity, cat. 92-915, Table 1.

Table 10

Participation of female spouses and single mothers in the labour force by age and by presence and age of children, 1976 and 1981

Age group	Years	Age of youngest child			Total W with children under 25	Total W with no children under 25
		0-5	6-11	12-24		
15-24	1976	30.2	45.9	54.2	30.6	74.9
	1981	41.1	57.8	64.4	41.5	85.7
25-44	1976	33.0	42.4	50.7	38.9	72.3
	1981	43.5	52.5	60.8	50.7	82.3
45 or over	1976	25.0	29.6	33.4	32.5	18.1
	1981	30.7	34.6	38.4	37.9	20.6
Total	**1976**	**32.4**	**39.6**	**38.3**	**36.4**	**41.5**
	1981	**44.6**	**50.1**	**45.8**	**46.3**	**46.6**

Sources: S. Messier, *Chiffres en main*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, 1981, p. 265.

Id, *Les femmes ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, 1984, p. 37.

Economic (in)security

Household work, essential socially and for the upkeep of the family unit, is nonetheless not considered to be "real work" (Mom can't work 'cause she has too much to do at home) and so is done free of charge.

For women who remain at home and have a spouse, his income is thus the sole basis of economic security. However, the security is uncertain since it can be jeopardized by divorce, separation, widowhood (the life expectancy of women exceeds that of men) or a prolonged period of unemployment. Women who do not have a spouse or no longer have one must rely for their subsistence either on their alimony payments, which may amount to very little and be paid irregularly, or on social aid, or if they have reached retirement age, on spouse's survivor benefits or on the old age pension. In 1981, the average income of adult women outside the labour force was $5 740, with spouses at the bottom of the scale, their average income being $1 716[9] (made up of various transfer payments such as family allowances).

WOMEN FROM CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

No specific studies have been undertaken on women from cultural communities in Québec. To venture to give any statistics at all on the subject would be risky indeed.

If we limit ourselves to immigrant women, that is, living in Québec but born in a foreign country, the field is restricted to one for which much more data is available. A recent study[10] undertaken by the ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration (M.C.C.I.) on this specific group and based on data from the latest census sheds light on the profile of this population.

Thus, we know that 8 % of the female population residing in Québec were born outside the country. They have come from every continent and from a great many countries; 8.6 % speak neither French nor English, 36.1 % speak both French and English, 30.7 % speak English and 24.6 % French. The female population 15 or over which cannot speak French is estimated at 97 200.

As for the level of schooling of immigrant women 15 or over, it should be noted that 17.6 % have completed studies at the university level and 16.2 % have completed studies at the non university post-secondary level. Moreover, 30.9 % have from 9 to 13 years of schooling and 28.9 % have from 1 to 8 years.

When compared to non immigrant women living in Québec, the percentage of women born outside the country who have undertaken university studies is some 7 % higher. However, a higher percentage of immigrant women have no schooling at all (6.3 % compared to 1.4 %).

9. Suzanne MESSIER, *Les femmes, ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, 1984, p. 35.

10. Aleyda LAMOTTE, *Les autres Québécoises*, preliminary version of a study on immigrant women and their integration into the Québec labour market, Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration, Direction de la recherche, January 1985.

Almost 65 % of immigrant women are married. Considering the trends observed in migration flows over the last few years, it can be assumed that many of them were admitted to the country as a dependent of their spouse.

Turning to employment, immigrant women account for 9 % of the female labour force in Québec. In 1981, the participation rate stood at 49.8 % for immigrant women and 47.5 % for other women in Québec. They occupy jobs traditionally held by women, concentrated in the service sector — health, education, maintenance, food and lodging, domestic services — and in the manufacturing industries. More than 22.5 % work in the clothing, hosiery and textile industries.

In 1981, immigrants women had received, an average income of $9 953; immigrants men had earned $17 346.

TRAINING

Recent studies undertaken in Québec and in Canada indicate that training is a key element in the economic situation of women and in their eventual occupational mobility in a labour market significantly influenced by technological change. Mention should be made of the Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (December 1984) and the reports of the conference on the financial status of women in the labour force published by the Economic Council of Canada (November 1984), and a recent study of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation on girls' academic choices.

WOMEN IN QUÉBEC AND EDUCATION

Recent developments

In 1981, men in Québec continued to receive more schooling than women (table 11 and figure 5). Women accounted for 54.6 % of the population with less than 9 years of schooling and 36.7 % of university graduates. However, signs were already evident that young women 15-24 were catching up to a significant degree: the proportion with at least nine years of schooling exceeded that of men (W 94.9 % ; M 93.5 %), as did the proportion with high school and post-secondary nonuniversity diplomas. Men continued to hold a slight lead with respect to university studies (table 12).

In 1982, more girls earned high school diplomas than did boys. At the collegiate level, girls earning a diploma in vocational studies were in the majority, whereas they accounted for half the diplomas awarded in the general stream. At the university level, women accounted for the majority of certificates awarded (62 %), half the bachelor degrees (49 %), 42 % of master's degrees and 28 % of doctorates.

Table 11

Population 15 or over by highest level of schooling and by sex, Québec, 1981

Level of schooling	Women		Men		Level of female participation
	N	%	N	%	
Less than ninth year	717 960	28.2	597 560	24.6	54.6
Ninth to thirteenth year, without C.E.S.[1]	508 015	19.9	473 380	19.5	51.8
Ninth to thirteenth year, with C.E.S.	487 465	19.1	346 110	14.3	58.5
Trade school dip. or cert.[2]	554 505	21.8	619 900	25.5	47.2
University credits	151 680	5.9	168 395	6.9	47.4
University degree	128 755	5.1	222 100	9.2	36.7
Total	**2 548 380**	**100.0**	**2 427 445**	**100.0**	**51.2**

1. Certificat d'études secondaires.

2. Certificate or diploma for a trade school or other nonuniversity studies.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Total Income, cat. 92-928, Table 7.

Table 12

Proportion of the population having reached certain levels of academic achievement, by sex and age group, Québec, 1981

Sex and age group	Level of academic achievement		
	Ninth year	High school diploma[1]	University[2]
Male	75.3	55.8	16.0
15-24	93.5	56.8	9.8
25-34	90.7	74.6	24.5
35 or over	59.1	46.9	15.5
Female	71.9	52.0	11.1
15-24	94.9	61.6	9.1
25-34	88.8	71.8	17.6
35 or over	54.2	39.1	9.1

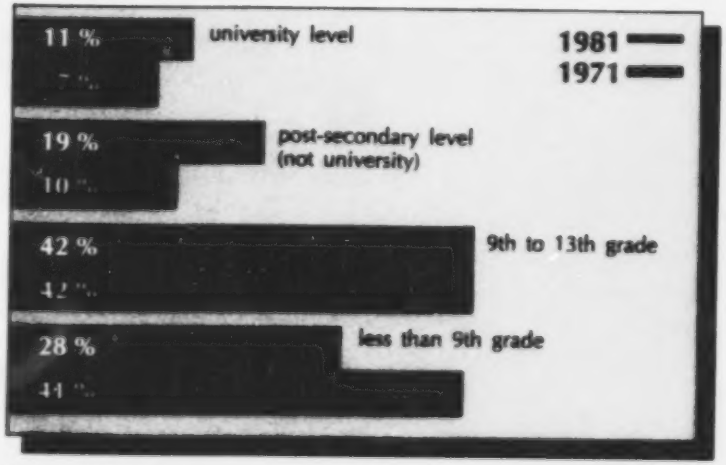
1. Also includes trade school graduates.

2. With or without a degree.

Source: Daniel Maisonneuve, *L'état de scolarisation de la population québécoise*, ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, Direction des études économiques et démographiques, June 1984.

Figure 5

Percentage distribution of female population 15 and over, by level of schooling, Québec, 1971 and 1981



Source: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, cat. 92-720 and 1981 Census of Canada, cat. 92-914.

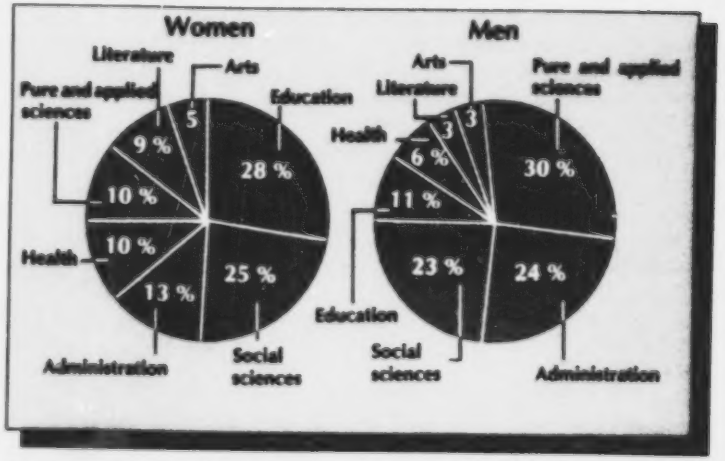
GIRLS AND CAREER CHOICES

Nontraditional choices: change is slow

Although much ground has been made up, there is still little diversification in the academic and vocational orientation of young women in Québec which, instead, is concentrated in many training sectors traditionally occupied by women. Thus, at the secondary school level in 1981-1982, although girls showed the same degree of preference for the vocational stream as boys, 80 % of them chose commerce, secretarial science, or esthetic care as their field of study. At the collegiate level, girls' preferences were oriented less towards technology and pure and applied science in favour of the humanities and administration. At the university level, although girls accounted for more than 50 % of enrollment in medecine and law and had registered in significantly greater numbers in administration, they were still a small minority in engineering, physical sciences, applied sciences and mathematics (figure 6).

Figure 6

University bachelor of arts graduates, specialized degrees, by discipline group and sex, Québec, 1982



Source: Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction des études économiques et démographiques, Diplômés 1982, Gouvernement du Québec, 1984.

ADULT EDUCATION

Specific needs

Adult education's major objective is to correct, through general training, the weaknesses in the schooling of various adult clienteles and to foster, through vocational training, better integration into the labour market. How well does it meet the specific needs of women?

The great number of data sources and the complexity of jurisdictions makes any observation tentative. In general, it appears that with respect to courses offered for adults at the secondary level, more women are registered in general training and socio-cultural training courses (popular education) than in vocational training. For the year 1981-1982, women accounted for 31.1 % of the enrollment in vocational training, 52.3 % in general training and 76 % in popular education. These data support what was said above: that older women have particular needs for general training.

The available data indicate that women's participation in vocational courses and on-the-job training is limited, even though they make up almost 40 % of the active labour force in Québec. Those who do participate tend to do so in traditional sectors, especially in the tertiary sector or the service or office work sectors. In 1981-1982, 57 % of women enrolled full-time in training courses, and 70 % of those enrolled part-time, were studying in the fields of administration and commerce.

Furthermore, it appears that both women who wish to return to the labour market and those seeking to further their training tend to favour the flexibility provided by part-time studies. The increase in part-time enrollment of women in university confirms this phenomenon: in 1981, 58 % of all women studying at the university level were enrolled part-time.

Finally, women do not participate to any great extent in federal training programs in nontraditional trades (NTT) and in trades experiencing shortages of skilled manpower (TESSM). The data for 1981-1982 of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission indicate that in Québec, women held only 11.6 % of training positions for nontraditional trades and somewhat more than 3 % of positions in courses related to trades experiencing shortages of skilled manpower. Although one third of the positions are reserved for women, there are a number of reasons which may explain their low participation. Among the most important, it should be emphasized that women frequently do not have the necessary prerequisites in mathematics and science, and few transition programs are available which enable women to catch up quickly in basic subjects.

SPECIFIC CLIENTELES

WOMEN SUPPORTING SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

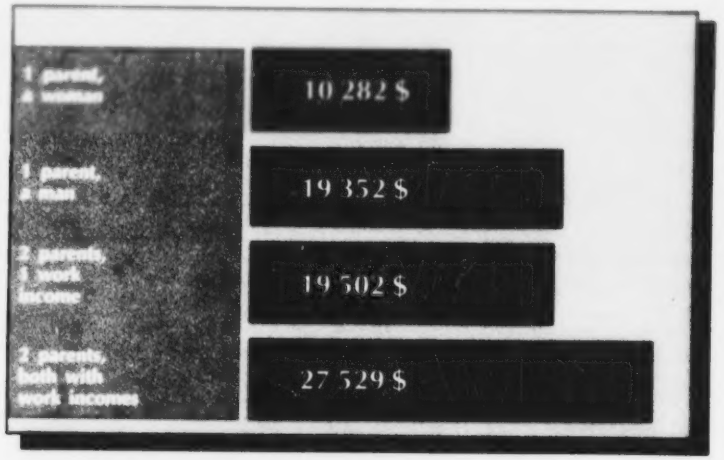
According to the 1981 Census of Canada, the number of single-parent families in Québec stood at 210 000, or 21.9 % of all single-parent families in Canada, while Québec families accounted for 26.4 % of all families in the country. As a group, single-parent families are growing much faster than families. In 25 years, from 1956 to 1981, they have grown twice as fast (143 %) as families as a whole (72 %). One fact remains constant: the majority (80 %) of single-parent families are headed by women.

Women supporting a family constitute the category of women with the least number of years of schooling: in 1981, 31 % of mothers between 15 and 54 years of age and without spouses had not completed ninth grade while 20 % of all women in the same age group were in the same situation.

Still in 1981, 41.6 % of mothers without spouses were part of the labour force, compared to 47 % of female spouses. Young women supporting a family are especially absent from the labour market since, beginning at age 35, their participation rate exceeds that of female spouses (table 13). For this same year, the median employment income for a woman single-parent stood at $10 300, compared to $19 500 for a two-parent family with one income[11] (figure 7).

Figure 7

Median work income, by type of family and number of incomes, Québec, 1981



Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, cat. 92-936.

11. Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, cat. 92-936.

Table 13

Women 15 or over in private households by labour force participation, family situation and age, Québec, 1981

Family situation and age	Total population	Labour force	Participation rate
Spouses			
15-24	158 010	111 720	70.7
25-34	422 925	240 075	56.8
35-44	322 490	174 605	54.1
45-54	257 570	112 490	43.7
55-64	190 110	44 595	23.5
65 or over	111 720	4 405	3.9
Total	**1 462 825**	**687 880**	**47.0**
Single mothers			
15-24	10 530	3 165	30.1
25-34	35 575	18 345	51.6
35-44	40 790	23 945	58.7
45-54	35 405	17 720	50.0
55-64	26 540	7 865	29.6
65 or over	24 555	1 025	4.2
Total	**173 390**	**72 065**	**41.6**
Single children			
15-24	381 795	185 860	48.7
25-34	36 305	28 595	78.8
35-44	11 030	7 625	69.1
45-54	6 330	4 030	63.7
55-64	2 950	1 415	48.0
65 or over	514	60	14.5
Total	**438 830**	**227 575**	**51.9**
Women outside the family			
15-24	68 040	52 515	77.2
25-34	69 860	61 635	88.2
35-44	35 920	28 690	79.9
45-54	41 835	26 775	64.0
55-64	70 235	27 160	38.7
65 or over	152 230	7 095	4.7
Total	**438 120**	**203 865**	**46.5**

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, special tabulations prepared for the Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, Tables 2 and 3.

Heads of single-parent families who are without employment income or other sources of income register for social aid. In 1973, 20 % of persons receiving social aid were women supporting a single-parent family (76 153 women).

The factors limiting access by single women to paid employment or to training/retraining programs are: very young children, limited child care resources and their cost, the limited sums women have to apply to a job search, the scarcity of jobs and a sometimes insufficient level of schooling.

WOMEN RECEIVING SOCIAL AID

In 1983, 199 275 women in Québec received social aid, accounting for 51 % of social aid recipients. Although women were a minority among single persons on the social aid rolls (46.2 %), they represented 57.2 % of families receiving social aid (table 14).

Although women supporting a family have contributed to the growth in the numbers receiving social aid, young women who have failed to find openings on the labour market once their studies were completed have had the greatest impact on the changing profile of the typical social aid clientele. While young women under 30 accounted for a little less than one quarter of Québec's female population (according to 1981 census figures), they accounted for a disproportionate share of social aid beneficiaries: 40.2 % of women beneficiaries living with their family and 38.7 % of those living alone (table 15 and figure 8).

Besides young people, a significant proportion of the single person category of the social aid clientele consists of women 45 years of age or over. These women are unmarried, widowed or divorced. For most of them, entry to the labour market is at best extremely difficult either because of a lack of job experience or because their experience is obsolete, or again because employers hesitate to hire and train older applicants. These women are among society's most disadvantaged members: on an annual basis, they are entitled to $4 932 (total income from transfers) or, once they are eligible for the old age pension, a minimum of $6 372.

Table 14

Distribution of social aid beneficiaries and average monthly benefit by household composition, marital status and sex of head of household, Québec, October 1983

Marital status	Women		Men		Level of female participation
	%	$	%	$	
Families					
Single	37.7	541	12.9	580	79.6
Married	4.4	563	77.5	592	7.0
Widowed	6.6	399	1.0	530	89.8
Legally separated	7.8	518	1.2	582	89.3
De facto separated	20.0	525	2.8	581	90.6
Divorced	23.5	533	4.6	583	87.3
Total %	**100.0**		**100.0**		**57.2**
N	**82 967**	**526**	**62 001**	**589**	
Single persons					
Single	61.0	260	78.7	268	40.0
Married	0.4	271	1.4	359	20.8
Widowed	14.1	302	1.6	357	88.5
Legally separated	3.5	367	3.1	372	49.0
De facto separated	8.6	366	6.3	370	54.3
Divorced	12.4	384	8.9	377	54.3
Total %	**100.0**		**100.0**		**46.2**
N	**116 308**	**294**	**135 246**	**290**	

Source: Ministère de la Main-d'oeuvre et de la Sécurité du revenu du Québec, Direction des politiques de sécurité du revenu, MENAS-I42 report, January 1984, Table 1.5.

Table 15

Distribution of social aid beneficiaries and average monthly benefit by household composition, age and sex of head of household, Québec, October 1983

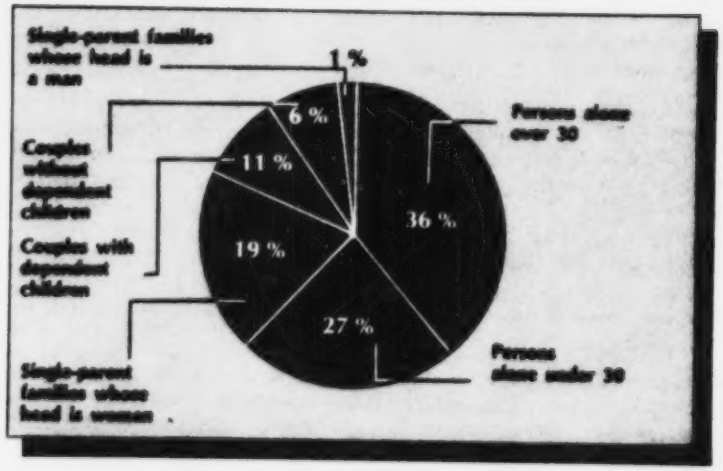
Age	Women %	Women $	Men %	Men $	Level of female participation
Families					
Under 20	3.3	518	0.4	498	91.4
20-29	36.9	535	17.7	564	73.5
30-44	42.6	531	35.1	620	61.9
45-54	12.4	508	19.7	618	45.7
55-64	4.6	467	23.5	582	20.9
65 or over	0.2	281	3.6	323	6.9
Total %	**100.0**		**100.0**		**57.2**
N	**82 667**	**526**	**62 001**	**589**	
Single persons					
Under 20	12.9	175	11.3	168	49.5
20-29	25.8	221	34.2	210	39.4
30-44	17.9	358	28.3	365	35.2
45-54	16.2	359	13.6	371	50.5
55-64	25.4	339	12.3	362	64.1
65 or over	1.8	343	0.3	337	81.7
Total %	**100.0**		**100.0**		**46.2**
N	**116 308**	**294**	**135 246**	**290**	

Sources: Ministère de la Main-d'oeuvre et de la Sécurité du revenu du Québec, Direction des politiques de sécurité du revenu, MENAS-J42 report, January 1984.

S. Messier, op. cit., p. 153.

Figure 8

Percentage distribution of social aid beneficiaries, by status and age, Québec, October 1983



Source: S. Messier, *Les femmes, ça compte*, Conseil du statut de la femme, Gouvernement du Québec, 1984, pp. 154 and 155.

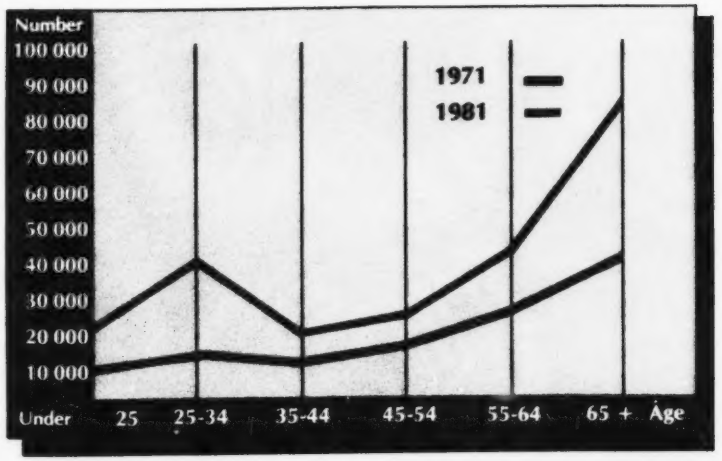
ELDERLY WOMEN

Poverty is a major problem among elderly women. Most of them who are now retired have lived in a traditional family setting and had no private income during their life. Widows are entitled to a reduced survivor's pension under the public pension plans. The situation is somewhat better for women who have worked full-time. However, the fact that they have always worked for very low wages is reflected in their pension benefits. Few of them (1 %) are eligible for a private pension plan established by the employer to bolster their retirement income.

As a result, despite the reforms introduced to public pension plans in 1981, three out of every five women 65 or over lived below the poverty line; for women age 75 or over, this proportion increases to four out of every five (figure 9).

Figure 9

Women living alone, by age group, Québec, 1971 and 1981



Source: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, cat. 92-707, and 1981 Census of Canada, cat. 92-905.

Beyond the statistical that has just been drawn, it is necessary to emphasize the particular problems women are faced with and to identify the suggested solutions for the future. These problems are centred on the following themes: maternity and family responsibilities; training; occupational inequalities; technological change; part-time work; work at home; the particular situation of women from cultural communities, of women who work in their spouse's business and farm women; access to credit and women's vulnerability to family violence.

The pages provide a brief description of these various problems and a glimpse at the solutions suggested by women's groups and by women consulted in all the major administrative regions in Québec.

MATERNITY AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

While changes in society require that women be ready to provide for their own economic security, they continue to undertake the tasks that have traditionally fallen to them: housekeeping, feeding, caring, educating and socializing with and for the children and the spouse. When these tasks are undertaken in addition to a paid job, they place an additional demand on the time of the woman involved and raise a series of problems for her. These problems are interrelated: the duration of maternity leave and the amount of maternity benefits, the availability and cost of child care services, recognition of women's dual role.

Maternity leave

Over the past 15 years, some elements of a maternity policy have been implemented. Recall the Unemployment Insurance Act in 1971, the Labour Standards Act in 1979, the programme d'allocation maternité du Québec in 1980 and the 1981 Act respecting occupational health and safety, which provides for protective reassignment for a female employee who is pregnant or nursing.

All these measures mark important gains for women in Québec. However, women who wish to take advantage of them must overcome problems caused by their being scattered or administered by different levels of government, by the variety of eligibility criteria and application procedures. Furthermore, since unemployment insurance maternity benefits replace only a small portion of lost wages (60 % during 15 weeks), a significant financial loss is involved. Finally, apart from workers covered under collective agreements, measures are not in place which would allow mothers to extend their maternity leave without pay to care for their infant over a longer period of time.

- **Suggested solutions**

  Maternity is an important social function. Women therefore believe that the rights and benefits enjoyed by female workers in the public and para-public sectors with respect to parental and maternity leave should be extended to all women in Québec; a Québec maternity fund is suggested to implement this solution. As for protective re-assignment, women feel that the procedure for dealing with requests must be speeded up and that a new assessment scale must be developed to take into account the variety of risk factors.

Child care services

The government has doubled the number of daycare places available over the last ten years. In addition, it has adopted various support measures for parents who utilize child care services. These measures include the deduction for child care expenses (0-13 years old) and the availability allowance for children 0-5 years of age as well as allowances granted to low-income parents to assists them to meet child care expenses.

Despite these efforts, some needs remain unsatisfied. In 1984, the number of children under 6 years of age requiring daily care was estimated at 280 000; the facilities available to meet this demand amounted to 27 912 places distributed among 560 day care centres and 1 519 recognized family child care services. Still in 1984, 197 459 children from 6 to 11 years old required some form of child care service during the afternoon or after school, because the mother and/or father were at work; for children in this age group, 13 189 places were available in schools. With respect to child care at the work place, less than 50 places were available within Québec.

Parents as individuals must themselves find solutions to their child care problems while balancing needs, freedom of choice and price. Existing services and programs do not always allow for such a balance. One has only to think of daycare schedules, how rarely babies are admitted, how difficult it is to find child care services in distant areas and, finally, of the average cost of $12.50 per day per child (1984 figures).

- **Suggested solutions**

To satisfy their need for child care services, women seek a comprehensive network of child care services which would be free of charge and controlled by the users. It must be accessible, diversified, implemented with the participation of all parties involved and financed by these same parties (business, labour, government organizations, municipalities, etc.).

Reconciling paid and unpaid work

Not every woman can be "Wonder Woman", so more and more working women are asking their spouse and children who are old enough to take a hand in housework. This iniative goes beyond the private domain since it has an impact on the availability of all workers and on the demands they make on employers with respect to working conditions.

In the work place, women seek conditions which would allow workers, both men and women, to carry out their family responsibilities without being penalized in regard to the development of their career, their employment income and access to a decent retirement. Lacking these conditions, a woman's professional career would simply mark time or even become an endless cycle: work interruption; return to work at the bottom of the scale (or almost) in precarious jobs, often part-time; resort to domestic work. None of these factors is likely to advance the cause of equal opportunity.

- **Suggested solutions**

Women demand that changes be made in how time spent on the job is organized, incorporating the notion of "work to measure" to allow this reconciliation between social roles both for men and for women. The same holds true for parental and family leave.

TRAINING

In spite of efforts made to overcome stereotypes, stereotypical cultural models continue to be perpetuated by individuals, families, the media, the schools, the Church and government institutions. Today, our social organization continues to determine which sex is best suited to fill certain roles and continues to provide for different career and personal development depending on whether one is a man or a woman. This reality manifests itself in girls' academic and occupational choices, which lead to low job diversification, little occupational mobility and low pay.

Stereotypical academic and occupational choices

As we have already seen, girls are well on their way in making up lost academic ground. However, a high proportion of them continue to opt for the same sectors. At university, they are well represented in education and health sciences, but relatively scarce in applied science and engineering. At CEGEP, biology technician courses are popular with girls whereas the physical sciences remain unpopular. In high school, 59 % of girls registered in vocational training choose commercial and secretarial courses.

- **Suggested solutions**

Women favour solutions which are designed to promote diversification in young girls' occupational choices. In particular, they suggest that efforts to remove sexual stereotypes from teaching material be continued, as well as the efforts to make young people aware of social roles and the impact these roles have on personal and occupational choices, and similar efforts with respect to persons active in the school setting to encourage the development of a non-sexist approach to teaching. Furthermore, they demand that science and mathematics courses be made obligatory throughout high school and that research be undertaken to determine the causes for girls' aversion to technology. Other measures put forward include the implementation of effective mechanisms to counter sexual harassment and discriminatory behaviour in the school (ex.: status of women committees, hiring an "ombudswoman" in each educational institution).

OCCUPATIONAL INEQUALITY

Occupational segregation and mobility

The concentration of women in boring and low-paid jobs or within certain sectors of activity remains a fact. In 1985, women continue to be secretaries, nurses, saleswomen and receptionists.

Furthermore, the social division of roles and the conviction that a woman's occupational development will, barring exceptional cases, differ from that of a man, continue to shape women's academic and occupational aspirations as well as their career plans. It is still the case that women are unable to embark on a process of either vertical or horizontal occupational mobility, either because of a feeling of incompetence or a lack of confidence in their abilities, or because they continue to bear the major part of the burden of housework.

The same constraints apply to their integration or reintegration into the labour market after a prolonged absence. When they return to the labour market after a time spent in adult education, many of them are still slotted into jobs that have traditionally been their preserve. They are under-represented in vocational training (15 % are enrolled compared to 44 % among men).

- **Suggested solutions**

Women feel that more varied occupational training, particularly oriented towards the trades of tomorrow, job retraining and equal opportunity programs, offer the best prospects for improving their representation in all fields of employment.

Unequal pay

Despite the rights recognized in the Charter of human rights and freedoms, differences in pay between men and women continue to exist in almost all occupations, resulting from direct or systemic discrimination based on sex.

- **Suggested solutions**

Women have reacted to this situation by formulating a series of demands ranging from the implementation of an equal opportunity policy to a public fund to provide financial assistance to women who lay a charge of job discrimination.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Seventy-five percent of jobs held by women are in the tertiary sector, and it is precisely in this sector that three-quarters of the equipment based on microprocessors are being installed. Sub-sectors targeted for the installation of micro-electronic equipment are banking, insurance, wholesale and retail merchandising, jobs related to personal services, accomodation, restaurants, public administration, education and the medical sector. These sub-sectors account for 78 % of Québec's female labour force. The new office automation applications (word-processing, personal computers, electronic scheduling, copiers linked to word-processing, electronic mail, videotex, teletex, etc.) will thus have a significant impact on employment among women.

The new technology is being installed in order to improve productivity by reducing labour costs, among others. As a result, it is expected that jobs will be lost in those sectors where such technology is applied, and that a shift in the demand for labour will take place towards those sectors in which the leading technology is developing. However, these two movements will not necessarily balance each other. This forecast is in addition to the fact that women are presently absent from specialized trades in which a shortage of manpower is anticipated.

The new technology will have a significant impact on how work is organized, staff qualifications and general working conditions. Several studies confirm a trend towards a polarization of qualifications, an increase in control and staff surveillance, atomization of tasks, isolation of the workers from each other, health problems (stress, posture problems, eye and sight difficulties), the growth of temporary employment, and work in the home.

Apart from its immediate consequences on work and employment, technological change could have a deeper impact; indeed, what progress has been achieved in moving towards equality could be erased by a return to traditional values and the ideas of the past.

• Suggested solutions

Bearing in mind the socialization problems mentioned above for women and employers, problems may emerge as companies move to incorporate new technology. This is why women insist on strict equal opportunity in employment rules, especially in the decision-making sectors and the non-traditional sectors of tomorrow, and on training and retraining programs both at school and in the work place, in order to strengthen their position to deal with this process.

PART-TIME WORK

Another major area of concern for the coming years is the spread of part-time work. Although part-time work has made a contribution to the quantitative participation of women in the labour market, the question to be asked now is what impact its continued spread will have on the financial situation of working women.

Part-time work is spreading so rapidly because it offers advantages to employees, both men and women, and to employers. Employers maintain that part-time work satisfies certain business needs, and that it constitutes a mark of economic and social progress. For workers, part-time work satisfies certain expectations. It provides an avenue for young people to enter the labour force gradually; older workers see it as an attractive mechanism for approaching retirement; it offers parents a form of work which allows them to balance family responsibilities and the necessity of earning an income; others see it as an answer to their wish for the implementation of new ways of organizing work time.

Part-time work also meets women's needs. For some (15 %), it enables work and family to be combined more smoothly; others (15 %) see it as a way of combining work and studies. For others, however, and this group is growing, part-time work was not a choice. More than 33 % indicate that they work part-time because full-time openings were not available.

Current trends indicate that part-time work will spread especially in those sectors in which women form the majority. It is feared that this development will stand in the way of women's access to equal income (currently, although part-time workers, both men and women, account for only 10 % of the labour force, they account for 50 % of workers at the minimum wage) and that, of its very nature, it will be unable to provide women with the opportunity to maintain their professional skills.

Women's concern with respect to the spread of part-time work is focussed on ensuring more short and long-term protection for women and men who work part-time.

Women have called attention to other realities of the labour market: conditions in regard to domestic work and work in the underground economy which are clearly less advantageous than those open to their male colleagues (ex.: construction).

• Suggested solutions

Women propose certain corrective measures to enable those persons concerned to achieve a higher degree of economic security: a consolidation of labour legislation with respect to part-time work and the exceptions to the Act respecting labour standards, as well as the strengthening of the Act.

WORK IN THE HOME

Limited social and economic recognition

Although attitudes have evolved to some extent, women remain primarily responsible for household work and caring for children. This work is undertaken on a full-time basis in the home, but is neither paid nor accorded full social and economic recognition. However, some recent measures have paved the way to such recognition.

Since January 1982, the gouvernement du Québec pays mothers with children under six years of age an availability allowance which varies with the child's rank: $300 for the first child, $200 for the second and $100 for each subsequent child. Women receive the allowance by completing a tax return.

Similarly, certain administrative measures and recent judgments tend to indicate a recognition of the economic value of this household production. For example, the Régie de l'assurance-automobile will pay a homemaker who suffers an accident her choice of either the additional costs incurred by the family to hire domestic help, or a proportion of the homemaker's potential earnings had she been on the labour market. Two methods of paying a woman for work done in the home... when the woman is no longer in a position to work. In the same vein, a judgment handed down by the Supreme Court of British Columbia enabled a man to collected compensation for the cost of domestic work which would have been done by this wife, who died accidentally.

Finally, the adult education policy orientation statement has accepted the principle that experience acquired in the home should be recognized for the purposes of training/retraining and in calculating work experience. However, implementation is still in the preliminary phases. Is the door open to recognition of work done in the home, as is now the case for volunteer work?

The consequences of limited recognition

The limited recognition accorded to women's household production has important consequences on their degree of economic security and the protection they enjoy. Economic dependence is the price these women have paid and continue to pay for assuming this responsibility. The only private income most women working in the home receive, during part or even all of their lifetime, is the family allowance and availability allowance payments. If the woman is without a spouse or is elderly, she may receive other transfers (social aid, old age pension).

A further, indirect, consequence which also has an impact on their degree of economic security involves the under-valuation of work undertaken by women in the labour market which, in many ways, is an extension of work done in the home: caring for children, cleaning work, sewing work, etc.

The value of household work

Recent research has attempted to estimate the value of domestic work. Economists have used various approaches to set a price on the various tasks undertaken in the home: for example, the income a woman working in the home could earn if she entered the labour force, or estimating the cost of replacing the mother with the full-time services of one or more persons (cook, seamstress, nurse, etc.). Depending on the approach taken, these calculations place the value of work done in the home at between 15 % to 40 % of the gross national product.

As we saw in the first chapter, the number of women working in the home is tending to fall. Although most women age 45 or over belong to this group, those under 45 are a definite minority.

Although work outside the home is acknowldeged as the way to real financial independence for the next generation and those to come, women nonetheless demand that concrete measures be taken for those who, in the past, have not had a real career choice and for those who today, as a result of the lack of jobs and group services as well as because of insufficient schooling, still do not enjoy genuine access to the labour market.

- **Suggested solutions**

Women favour solutions that emphasize greater recognition and "visibility" of work carried out within the household. For example: legal status for women working in the home; access to the Québec Pension Plan and other fringe benefits for these women; the recognition of experiential learning gained in the home for the purpose of studies or entering the labour market; recognition in the Civil Code of household work and child care as elements which contribute to the accumulation of the family estate; full access to the network of child care services, etc.

WOMEN FROM CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

In dealing with women from cultural communities, those whose families first came here one or more generations ago must be distinguished from those who live here but were born abroad. The latter will be referred to as "immigrant women". A recent study[1] on the subject indicates that some 260 000 such women currently live in Québec.

Immigrant women who are permanent residents are entitled to the same services and conditions as Québec citizens, regardless of the immigrant category they belong to.

However, as a general rule and for a certain number of years, men and women who have been sponsored do not have access to certain services such as social aid or student assistance, since their admission to the country depends on certain financial commitments made in their regard by a person who has vouched for their entry into the country.

In addition to the services generally available to residents and citizens of Québec, services, such as COFI[2], are provided specifically for immigrants.

Every immigrant, man or woman, who is a permanent resident, at least 16 years of age and who intends to enter the labour market, is eligible for COFI. However, they are not all eligible for the allowances that go with it. The federal government pays the allowance on the basis of the category or sub-category to which the student belongs. Thus, for example, men and women who are sponsored are not eligible, unless they are refugees.

As for those other persons who are permanent residents, at least 16 years of age but do not intend to enter the labour market, they may enroll in part-time French courses offered by the ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration (M.C.C.I.).

Moreover, immigrant women face an obstacle with respect to the recognition of diplomas and experiential learning. Upon their arrival in Québec, these women (and men) must submit their case to the M.C.C.I. for evaluation. The evaluation is based on ministère de l'Éducation du Québec standards which are set for all levels of instruction, so that diplomas recognized abroad fail, at times, to be recognized here. As a result, these people are forced to upgrade their studies or alter their choices on the labour market, frequently towards lower-paying jobs. The case of experiential learning among immigrant women is being pursued as part of the general process for all Québec women on this issue.

This situation, together with the fact that almost 37 % of immigrant women do not speak French, increases the difficulty they face in penetrating the labour market.

- **Suggested solutions**

In order to achieve equality of opportunity in entering the labour market in every field, immigrant women have formulated a series of demands concerning the essential tools required to enter this market: equal opportunity programs, training courses, courses in French, recognition of experiential learning, daycare. They also demand improved working conditions through various amendments to the Labour Standards Act and the Act respecting occupational health and safety as well as genuine recourse to the remedies provided under these two acts.

1. Aleyda LAMOTTE, *Les autres Québécoises*, preliminary version of a study on immigrant women and their integration into the Québec labour market, Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration, Direction de la recherche, January 1985.

2. COFI: Centre d'orientation et de formation pour immigrants where full-time French courses are provided by the M.C.C.I. over a period of 30 weeks, as part of the Programme national de formation en établissement (P.N.F.E.).

WOMEN WORKING IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS

The measures adopted by the federal and Québec governments to provide more substantial economic recognition of the work performed by a spouse in a family business have not produced the results anticipated. A large number of these women continue to work without either legal or financial status. As a result, what they gain from their contribution to the business will only be determined when the marriage contract is liquidated following a divorce or death.

- **Suggested solutions**

The Association des femmes collaboratrices believes that the solution lies in adopting general legislation to regulate family businesses.

FARM WOMEN

Women who make their living in agriculture have experienced profound changes, and the small family farm has become big business. Farm women seek immediate recognition of their active role in this changing domain in order to take advantage of the spinoffs from what is becoming a profitable sector, rather than simply attending to jobs that are frequently repetitive and monotonous.

- **Suggested solutions**

Farm women seek recognition for their work and believe that more equitable policies, regardless of matrimonial ties, must be adopted for men and women working in agriculture. This means access to ownership of the means of production, equal opportunity in obtaining credit, and sharing in the decisions of agricultural operations and organizations.

CREDIT AVAILABILITY

Women continue to encounter discriminatory attitudes both when they attempt to obtain financing to launch a business venture and when they apply for a consumer loan. The spouse may be required to co-sign, and the woman's credit history may be examined more closely and with a greater degree of skepticism than if the spouse had applied for the loan.

- **Suggested solutions**

Women demand that this situation be remedied by specifically banning all credit discrimination by law, and that the law require financial institutions to adopt a clear policy of male/female equality with respect to credit availability.

WOMEN'S VULNERABILITY TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

As a result of their precarious economic situation (dependent on the spouse's income), many women in Québec find themselves more vulnerable to family violence. The victims need ready access to resources adopted to their particular situation: temporary housing for themselves and their children, financial assistance, support in their efforts to achieve financial independence.

Women have emphasized that shelters and centres providing temporary housing for women who are victims of family violence play a significant role in providing such services: since its creation, this network has received 35 000 women.

- **Suggested solutions**

Women maintain that these centres should be recognized as an alternative resource and an essential service, that the subsidies they receive should be renewed automatically and indexed annually, and that women housed in these centres should receive full social aid benefits.

CONCLUSION

International Women's Decade is over. However, does that imply that, in today's world, the problems women continue to face must take a back seat to those faced by other groups, youth for example? In so doing, one would be losing sight of the fact that women make up half the population and that while youth is a temporary condition, womanhood is permanent.

It now appears that technological change will be the determining factor on whether working conditions for the labour force in general and women in particular improve or deteriorate. If the challenge of international competition is to be met with a strategy based on new and/or improved technology, this strategy must provide benefits for evervone. In the past, the greatest increases in participation in the labour force have been women and that will continue to be true in the future. That being so, the experience of women must be closely monitored if Québec, business, and women themselves are to benefit from the economic opportunities of the years ahead.

Although there is still progress to be made before complete equality between men and women is achieved, the past decade abounds with major accomplishments and advances for women. Steps in the right direction have taken the form of legislative amendments, programs, structures, and new levels of awareness among women and other socioeconomic agents. Before evaluating the current situation and pointing out the road for the future, it is important to give due recognition to what has been accomplished.

A STATUS OF WOMEN POLICY AND A COORDINATION STRUCTURE

In 1978, the Conseil du statut de la femme brought down a general policy on the status of women in Québec: "Pour les Québécoises: égalité et indépendance". This document was the result of several months of research and consultation; it provided the government with a global view of the status of women and made recommendations targeted towards various departments and organizations.

After the document was approved by the Cabinet, a coordination structure was put into place. A new cabinet post was created: Minister responsible for the status of women; a standing interdepartmental committee on the status of women was set up and given the mandate of ensuring the coordination and development of government policies and activities with respect to the status of women. In addition, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine was created to advise and provide support to the minister and the standing committee.

Finally, several departments have appointed an official responsible for the status of women; these persons, many of whom belong to the highest echelons of management, are chiefly responsible for development and coordination in all matters respecting the status of women in their departments.

MAJOR CHANGES IN LEGISLATION

Family law

The Act to establish a new Civil Code and to reform family law (Bill 89), which came into force April 2, 1981, marked an important step since it gave clear recognition to the full equality of the spouses in a marriage with respect to their mutual rights and obligations in regard to the education and support of their children.

Under this act, the family residence is chosen jointly by the spouses. In addition, it introduces standards of protection with respect to the family residence so that, for example, the spouse who is not the owner of the residence may, if he or she has registered a family residence declaration, prevent the other spouse from selling the residence without his or her consent. The act also contains provisions for the protection of the spouse who is not the lessor.

The new act clearly provides that henceforth, each spouse will preserve his or her family name and given names; women who married before the act came into force are free to choose. In addition, the child may bear the name of his father, his mother, or a compound name of at most two parties.

Finally, the new Code has introduced the notion of compensation benefit to recognize the contribution of one the spouses to the increase in the estate of the other, particularly in the case of women working for their husbands in a family business.

Still on the subject of family law, it should be noted that the government passed a law in 1981 which deals with the collection of alimony and child support payments and has set up a free collection service to assist in the recovery of payments which have not been.

The Charter of human rights and freedoms

Adopted in 1975, the Charter of human rights and freedoms bans discrimination based on sex, marital status or ethnic origin, among other reasons, whether in hiring, teaching, occupational training, promotion, etc. It also entrenches the principle of equal pay for equal work. Similarly, it created the Commission des droits de la personne to foster the stated principles, hear any charge of discrimination, conduct enquiries and make recommendations. The Charter and the Commission are important tools for women and other groups who are victims of discrimination and seek to have their rights respected. An amendment to the Charter in 1982 added pregnancy, age and harassment as prohibited reasons for discrimination. A further amendment to the Charter allows for the implementation of equal opportunity programs; the purpose of these programs is to take corrective measures for persons, such as women, who belong to groups which have been victims of discrimination. However, the regulations relative to these programs have not yet been adopted.

Labour legislation

Apart from the Charter of human rights and freedoms, which upholds the principle of non-discrimination for reasons of sex in the work place, the government has, over the last decade, passed several measures designed to improve the working conditions of Québec women.

Prior to 1978, a pregnant woman who took leave in order to give birth ran the risk of being fired. On November 15, 1978, the Commission du salaire minimum, since become the Commission des normes du travail, published an order to correct this situation. The order introduced an 18 week maternity leave and provided that employees returning after their leave were to be reinstated in their jobs with the benefits they would have earned had they remained at work.

In January 1979, the government inaugurated the $240 maternity allowance for workers eligible for the federal unemployment insurance maternity program. This allowance was introduced to cover the two-week waiting period provided under the Unemployment Insurance Act.

The Labour Standards Act took effect in April 1980. This law provides all workers with new rights: a daily rest period, 24 consecutive hours of rest per week, annual vacations after one year of service, a standard 44 hour work week, special leave for marriage, death, birth, adoption and remedies in cases of illegal dismissal or dismissal without valid cause.

Since the Act respecting occupational health and safety became effective in January 1981, a worker is entitled to refuse to carry out a task if he or she has reasonable grounds for believing such task is dangerous to his or her health, safety or physical integrity. Employees who exercise this right are deemed to have been at work and must be paid for their time.

In addition, this act entitles a woman who is pregnant or nursing and is working under dangerous conditions to protective reassignment or leave if the employer is unable to transfer her to other tasks. This measure is unique in North America, and obliges the employer to grant the woman leave for a period extending up to delivery or to the end of the nursing period. The employer must then reinstate the woman, who is entitled to all the advantages associated with her job during her absence or assignment to other tasks.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Socialization and girls' training

Because of the importance of education and socialization for the improvement of women's situation in society, significant efforts have been made in this area over the past ten years. Special emphasis has been placed on::

- correcting the sexist nature of school material;
- removing sexist elements from teaching methods by focussing on the integration of an awareness of sexism;
- the academic and vocational orientation of girls so as to allow girls and women enrolled in the education system to expand their academic and vocational choices.

In theory, girls may follow any avenue of instruction. In practice, a ghetto phenomenon persists in training courses for several occupations (welding, automobile mechanics, beauty care, secretarial arts), particularly in high school. Efforts to correct this situation have been focussed on school personnel, with the objective of stimulating and supporting an expansion of academic and vocational choices for girls. In particular, the following should be noted:

- an activity package called Vire-vie, designed to increase adolescents' awareness of the realities of work and the lives of today's working women, and of the meaning of marriage for their future;
- "pareil, pas pareille", a program designed to heighten awareness of sexism, targeted towards parents and individuals working with children from 0 to 6;
- the development of an evaluation grid for discriminatory stereotypes and its incorporation, since June 1981, into the approval process for new school texts for the elementary and high school levels;
- in 1983, the production of a specific evaluation grid for adult education material;
- an inventory of occupational interests from which all sexist elements have been removed, made available to guidance personnel since 1980;
- a career choice education program integrated with the compulsory high school general instruction curriculum;
- programs on family organization and introduction to technology which have been mandatory for both boys and girls in high school since September 1984;
- "Explorons de nouveaux espaces", an information package on non-traditional trades;
- the "Éméritas-Déméritas" awards to focus public attention on sexism in advertising.

Adult training

The Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes has done important work in making the needs of this segment of the population known and in putting forward recommendations for adapting the formal and alternative education systems to these needs.

Efforts have been undertaken to set up or diversify the resources available to women who wish to enter or reenter the labour market after an absence of some years, and/or undergo occupational retraining. The Transition-Travail program enables a person to explore the various sectors of employment, and is currently offered in forty school boards and twelve CEGEP. Other transition programs, often initiated by groups of women, have gradually developed in several regions. The ministère de la Main-d'oeuvre et de la Sécurité du revenu uses outside manpower services, some of which offer guidance programs specifically designed for women (especially heads of families, widows or divorced women), such as the "Formation préparatoire à l'emploi" course. Some sixty courses offered within the manpower training program in Québec (course in male-dominated trades) reserve a number of positions for women.

In recent years, Québec has become concerned about training and retraining manpower which is affected by the introduction of new technology. As a result, the continuing education policy places particular emphasis on training women.

In addition, substantial funds have been allocated to manpower retraining and adaptation in those industrial sectors feeling the impact of technological change, such as textiles and clothing, and in which a high proportion of jobs are held by women.

The Québec Pension Plan

Over the years, several changes have been made to the Q.P.P. which have improved certain situations. Since 1977, it has been possible, upon request from either of the parties, to have pension credits accumulated during the marriage divided equally. In the same year, women who temporarily withdraw from the labour market to care for children under seven were authorized to subtract such time from their contributory period. In 1980, women working in a family business were authorized to contribute to the Québec Pension Plan on the basis of the salary paid to them out of the business. Since 1983, a survivor's pension continues to be paid if the surviving spouse remarries. In addition, pensions paid to surviving spouses have been increased by over $70.00 per month since January 1984; 95 % of such surviving spouses are women.

Child care services

Between 1978 and 1984, the number of daycare places has more than doubled, rising from 13 271 to 27 912. In 1984, 13 189 places were available in schools and 1 519 with licenced families.

The Office des services de garde à l'enfance was created in December 1979. This organization replaced the ministère des Affaires sociales, which had implemented a grant program for daycare centres in 1974, insofar as child care services are concerned, and provides financial assistance:

- to low-income parents whose children receive child care services;
- to daycare centres of child care agencies;
- to new daycare centres in the start-up phase;
- to daycare centres which accept maladjusted children.

Other elements of its mandate include ensuring that child care services meet a certain standard of quality, and encouraging the smooth development of these services with other family policies.

Women as entrepreneurs

The phenomenon of entrepreneurship among Québec women is not widely known. To remedy the situation and provide more effective support to these women, the ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce has set up a team responsible for promotion among university graduates and the business community, and for receiving and providing technical support to projects and credit applications from women entrepreneurs.

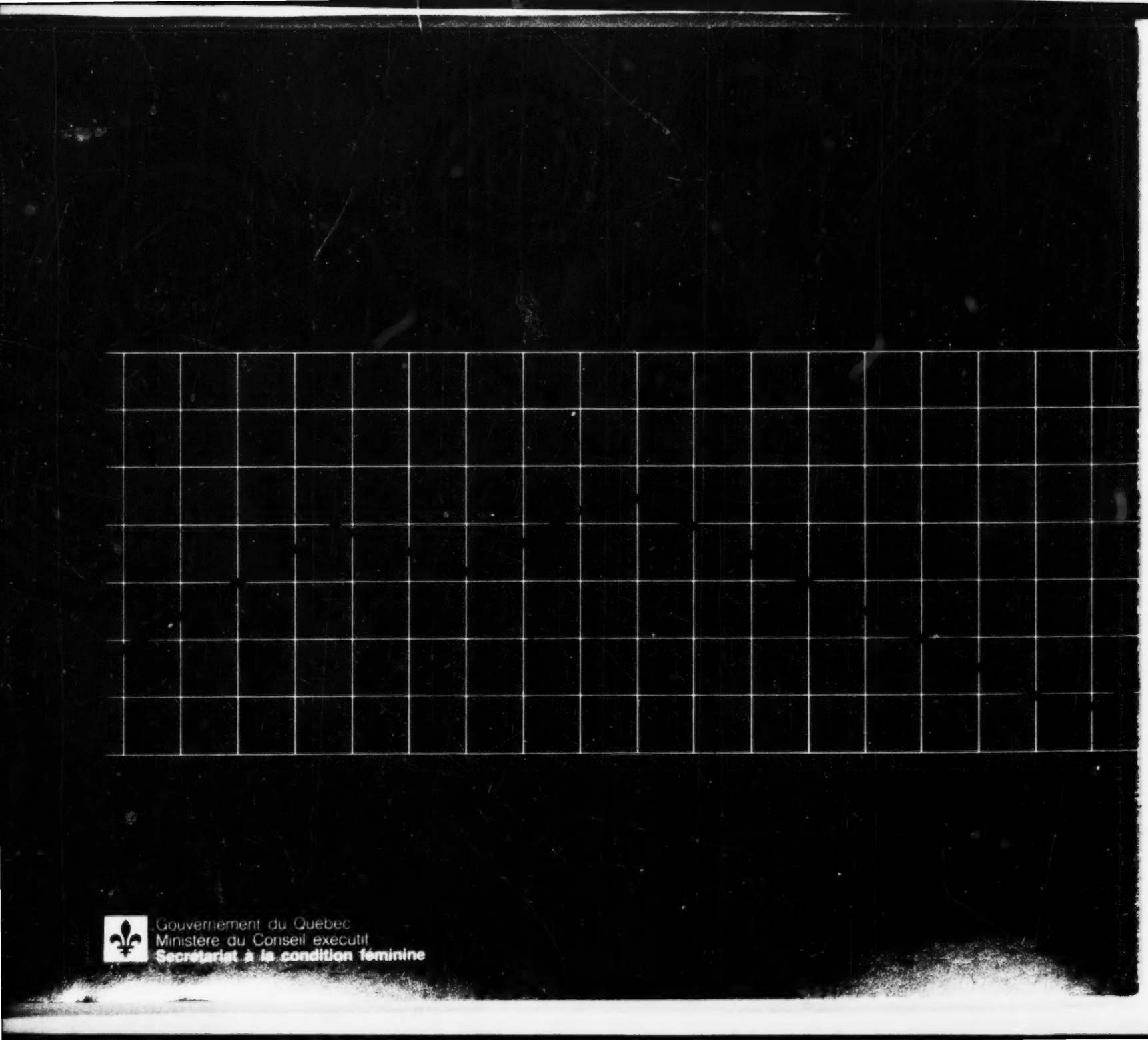
Business women are beginning to form groups and develop tools: networks, directories, training in various subjects, etc.

Family violence

In recent years, attention has been focussed on the problems of women who are victims of violence and on financing alternative services. Initiatives have been undertaken to raise the level of awareness and provide information; one particular example was the series of regional conferences on violence against women and children sponsored by the ministère de la Justice with the participation of the ministère des Affaires sociales and the Conseil du statut de la femme.

Between 1977 and 1984, the ministère des Affaires sociales has provided more than $10 million to centres providing housing for women who have been victims of violence and to rape crisis centres.

Finally, in February 1984, the ministère des Affaires sociales released a consultation paper on its policy in regard to assistance to women who are victims of violence which described, among other items, the department's orientations and a financing program for housing centres and rape crisis centres.



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